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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, author of liberty, who has made and preserved us as a nation, bless today our lawmakers who are called to serve the Republic by bringing order out of chaos, truth out of falsehood, and peace out of strife. May our Senators lift the shield of their integrity against the enemies of justice, freedom, and faith at this time when the world's hopes depend on character. Lord, guide our legislators with Your providence until this Nation shall gleam undimmed by tears of want, worry, and woe.

Make us all worthy of the sacrifices of those who have given the last, full measure of devotion for freedom.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 24, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kashi Way, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court for a term of fifteen years.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). The majority leader is recognized.

AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF ESCORT COMMITTEE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Acting President pro tempore of the Senate be authorized to appoint a committee on the part of the Senate to join with a like committee on the part of the House of Representatives to escort His Excellency Binyamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, into the House Chamber for the joint meeting on Wednesday, July 24, 2024.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ISRAEL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, later this afternoon, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu will address a joint meeting of Congress.

It has been 291 days since Israel suffered the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust at the hands of evil Hamas terrorists. The pain of October 7 remains fresh because, to this day, at least 116 Israeli hostages remain in captivity, including women, teenagers, the elderly; including American citizens; including New Yorkers—my constituents.

Yesterday afternoon, I met with some of the families of the hostages, where I reaffirmed a solemn promise I made months ago and each day since: I am doing everything in my power to ensure their loved ones come home safe and sound. Today is yet another opportunity to fight for just that.

Even though I disagree with many of Bibi Netanyahu's policies, I will attend the speech because the United States' relationship with Israel remains ironclad and transcends any Prime Minister or President, and we must do all we can to get our hostages home.

I told the families of the hostages I will continue supporting the Biden administration and all negotiators as they push Hamas to agree to a deal that will release the hostages and bring relief to Gaza. The negotiators have agreed on a framework, and now is the time to close the deal.

Later today, I will also meet with Prime Minister Netanyahu during a bipartisan, bicameral meeting of the congressional leadership. I promised the families I would relay their message directly with the Prime Minister: Do all you can to bring the hostages home now.

Many of the families I met with yesterday were the very same families I met with during my trip to Israel just a few days after the October 7 attack

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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where their loved ones were captured. I can only imagine what the last 8 months have been like for these courageous souls, not knowing if their loved ones are even alive.

I was particularly glad to meet with some of the families from New York, including the family of Itay Chen, who was murdered on October 7 and whose body is still being held hostage. I also met with the family of Omer Neutra, who remains in captivity and whose family will be attending the speech as my guests.

Omer was serving as a tank commander near Gaza when he was taken, but back home he had his whole life ahead of him. He is a student athlete, a Knicks fan, the captain of his school's basketball team, and was set to attend Binghamton University, one of the finest universities in the country, after his service. And there are many, many just like Omer whom we still need to bring home.

There is simply no time to waste with a deal within reach. Yesterday, another hostage family member told me the tragic story of her family. Her mother and brother were both taken captive by Hamas on October 7. Today, her mother is home, released in the November hostage deal, but her brother is dead, murdered in captivity. As she told me, "the difference in fates of her mother and her brother lies at the negotiating table."

The survival of the hostages depends on closing a deal now. The Prime Minister must make bringing the hostages home a top priority, and I promised the families that is what I will tell him when we meet this afternoon.

KOSA-COPPA

Mr. President, on a different issue, KOSA and COPPA, tomorrow, the Senate will get the chance to take a major step forward on ensuring our kids' safety. We will hold a cloture vote on a measure that contains two resoundingly bipartisan bills: the Kids Online Safety Act, or KOSA, and the Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act, or COPPA.

Both of these bills have been around since last Congress. Both have gone through the Senate Commerce Committee without opposition. But there have been many roadblocks to both KOSA and COPPA, and the parents who have been pushing and pushing and pushing for kids' online safety are fed up with the delay.

But I believe this time will be different. This time I am very hopeful that we can pass these bills through the Chamber.

I have worked closely with Members on both sides to get these bills ready for the floor. I made sure Members had plenty of time to offer their input, work through disagreements, and arrive at a consensus. Now, the moment to act has arrived. We are going to get our chance to take the next big step tomorrow.

I have had many difficult meetings with constituents as a Member of this

body, but few, few have been as heart-wrenching as the meetings I have had with the parents of kids who took their own lives because of what happened to them on social media.

I met with one parent from New York yesterday whose child suffered this terrible fate. She has lost her child forever.

And I have met many others back home and across the country who are in a similar situation. Some of the parents told me about how their kids were relentlessly bullied online. Others told me about how their kids were targeted by predators or duped into buying deadly drugs. Virtually all the parents shared their stories about the intense mental anguish their kids suffered.

When I talked to the parents who lost their children, when I saw the pictures of their kids that they were holding up yesterday—I have seen those pictures before. I think of my kids when they were little. I think of my grandkids today. What if one of them goes online and loses their life? God forbid. God forbid.

The loss shatters your heart, and I think to myself that if we could get these bills done, it would do so much good for millions of families across the country. Tomorrow is the day we must act.

So I want to thank so many of the Senators who labored tirelessly on these bills. I especially want to thank Senators BLUMENTHAL and BLACKBURN for their work on KOSA, as well as Senators MARKEY and CASSIDY for their work on COPPA. I also wish to thank Chair CANTWELL for her excellent leadership on the Commerce Committee. I look forward to voting on advancing KOSA/COPPA here on the floor later this week.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, now, next topic, tonight President Biden will address the Nation on a most solemn matter, his decision—his generous, wonderful decision—to pass the torch at the end of his term and his vision for the future of America.

President Biden's decision to stand down from a second term in office will go down as one of the greatest acts of patriotism of any President in our long, storied U.S. history. To pass the torch is one of the hardest decisions possible for someone whose life has been entirely about leadership, but he did it because he believed it was the right thing to do for the country he loved so much.

Nevertheless, tonight I expect President Biden to remind the American people that one thing hasn't changed: Right now, our democracy stands at a crossroads, and we—all of us—have a lot of work left to do.

Democrats want to keep America moving forward with greater hope and opportunity for everybody. Republicans, on the other hand, are hell-bent on taking our country backward with chaos, with dysfunction.

If anyone needed a clearer contrast between the Democrats' and the Re-

publicans' vision for America, just take a look at the latest Trump plan proposed by the very conservative, the arch conservative Heritage Foundation. The more the American people learn the details of Project 2025, the more trouble Donald Trump is going to have. Let me say that again: The more the American people learn the details about Project 2025, the more trouble Donald Trump is going to have. The Trump plan calls for the most conservative agenda in American history, chocked full of radical, rightwing MAGA proposals that are way out of line with the mainstream.

While Democrats are focused on protecting reproductive rights and a woman's right to choose, the Trump plan lays the groundwork for a national abortion ban. While Democrats are focused on providing student debt relief to millions of borrowers, the Trump plans calls for defunding the Department of Education. While Democrats are focused on creating jobs and making our Tax Code fairer for working families, the Trump plan calls for more tax cuts for the very wealthy, the corporate elites, the mega corporations. While Democrats are focused on tackling climate change and lowering energy costs, the Trump plan would gut our clean energy investments, empower the Nation's biggest oil and gas producers, and throw thousands and thousands who are now in good-paying jobs out of work.

The list goes on and on and on, but the bottom line is this: America cannot afford 4 years of the Trump plan. It would be dangerous for our democracy, disastrous for our economy, horrible for the average American family, and downright destructive for the progress we have made in the last 4 years.

HONORING DETECTIVE JOHN GIBSON AND
OFFICER JACOB CHESTNUT

Mr. President, 26 years ago today, Detective John Gibson and Officer Jacob Chestnut of the Capitol Police gave their lives in the line of duty while defending the Capitol from an attack by a lone gunman.

On what was a very dark day in the history of this building, Detective Gibson and Officer Chestnut demonstrated extraordinary courage in the face of extraordinary danger. If not for their selfless actions that day, many innocent people would have been injured or would have lost their lives.

Days like today remind us of the immense responsibilities of the Capitol Police. It is no easy task to be the guardians of the Capitol complex, but Capitol Police do it every single day with unwavering dedication and courage.

So we will never forget the sacrifice that Detective Gibson and Officer Chestnut made 26 years ago. May their memories continue to be a blessing to their families, to all of us here who remember that awful day, and to their brave brothers and sisters in the Capitol Police.

I yield the floor.